



Testimony of

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Connecticut Commission on Aging

Transportation Committee

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RE: Senate Bill 700 – An Act Concerning the State Matching Grant Program for Municipal and Regional Demand Responsive Transportation for Persons with a Disability who are Sixty or More Years of Age

Thank you for this opportunity to **provide support** for this important proposal before you today, which would provide a continued level of \$5 million in annual funding to the demand responsive transportation program established by CGS §13b-38bb. The program provides transportation to older adults (aged 60+) and persons of all ages with disabilities.

As you know, the Connecticut Commission on Aging (CoA) is the nonpartisan state agency devoted to preparing Connecticut for a significantly changed demographic and enhancing the lives of the present and future generations of older adults. For seventeen years, CoA has served as an effective leader in statewide efforts to promote choice, independence and dignity for Connecticut's older adults and persons with disabilities. As part of our statutory mandate set forth in CGS §17b-420, CoA reviews and comments on proposed state legislation and budgetary issues.

The US Supreme Court's *Olmstead* decision and Connecticut state law (CGS §17b-337) require that individuals with long-term care needs have the option to choose and receive long-term care and support in the least restrictive, appropriate setting. It should be noted that "long-term care" refers to the full range of services and supports needed to help people who require assistance over an extended period due to disability or chronic illness. Long-term care can range from receiving home-delivered meals a few times per week, to having a home-health aide assist with personal needs each day, to receiving care in an institutional setting – and everything in between. It is not restricted to older adults.

In order to live successfully in the community, individuals of all ages and abilities need reliable, comprehensive transportation to get to medical appointments, the grocery store, religious and social activities and more. According to the Long-Term Care Needs Assessment (LTCNA), conducted in 2007 by the UConn Health Center's Center on Aging, transportation is the greatest concern for residents receiving long-term care in the community. Providers of long-term care services also cite transportation as the major missing service for community-based individuals.



Demographics support the need for greater access to transportation services over the next several years. The LTCNA indicates that, between 2000 and 2020, the number of people not driving in the United States is estimated to rise by 15%, affecting the transportation system as well as home- and community-based services. We also know that the number of people in Connecticut over the age of 40 who need long-term care services is projected to increase by 28% between 2006 and 2030.

The proposal before you will provide funding for an important service in towns across the state. This service can be particularly important outside of urban areas, where access to public transportation is less comprehensive. The program is designed to enhance regional coordination strategies, to eliminate duplication and enhance efficiency and services. It has provided needed transportation to people who might otherwise not be able to get to out-of-town medical appointments, as well as shopping and errands.

Studies show that enhancing access to transportation benefits not just individuals, but their communities as well. For example, more than half of non-drivers 65 or older stay home on any given day partially because they lack transportation options. Compared with those who still drive, older non-drivers make 15% fewer trips to the doctor, 59% fewer shopping trips and visits to restaurants, and 65% fewer trips for social, family and religious activities. So, it is clear that providing transportation benefits everyone.

Governor Malloy's budget proposes to cap funding for this program at \$3 million annually. CoA recommends investing in this important transportation program, in order to help people stay in their homes and communities and live high quality lives.

Thank you.